

# Issues and Opportunities

## 1. Introduction

This part of the plan documents the issues and opportunities that in some way have the potential to affect the Village's future. The issues range from localized concerns to those that are more regional in scope. Although the Village has limited control over regional and statewide trends and events, they are included here to ensure that they are considered and factored in the preparation of this plan to the extent appropriate.

Issue and opportunities described in this chapter were derived from various sources primarily during the initial drafting of the plan in 2004. As part of the 10-year update, the issues and opportunities were reviewed to ensure they reflect current priorities and level of concern. Most of the issues and opportunities in the original plan are still valid. Some however, were removed.

## 2. 2004 Public Input

### Community Survey

In the spring of 2004, the Washington County UW-Extension worked with Richfield to develop and distribute a community survey to residents. The purpose of the survey was to assess resident satisfaction with Richfield, and understand their desires and expectations for the future. The survey instrument and results are provided as an appendix. Results from specific questions are highlighted throughout the plan to illustrate resident opinions and desires related to topics discussed in the element chapters.

### SWOT Analysis

A SWOT planning meeting is a planning exercise to get communities thinking about:

- Where they have been
- Where they are
- Where they want to be in the future
- How they want to get there

On February 19, 2004, the Plan Commission hosted a SWOT exercise as part of the Vision and Value Meeting. The objective of the exercise was to find out how residents, business owners, appointed and elected officials, and other local stakeholders viewed various aspects of the Town. This could include their feelings on physical things such as roads, utilities, etc., and "quality of life" issues. At the meeting, each participant was asked to write down what he or she thought were the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Each person could list as many items as he/she wished under each category. Next, participants worked in small groups to discuss their answers and collectively decide on the three the most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Many of the groups had identical ideas. A list of the ideas expressed (including all of the group ideas and some additional individual ideas) is provided in the table. This information served as an action agenda for plan development.

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### What Does SWOT Stand For?

**Strength** – Something that makes a community standout when compared to other communities. Something that makes you proud to call the community home. A strength can be a physical asset, a program, or an environmental condition (i.e., friendly community atmosphere).

**Weakness** – Opposite of strength. A problem that needs to be addressed.

**Opportunity** – Something that could be done to improve the community. A potential.

**Threat** – A threat may be internal or external. A threat can be anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community.

## Strengths

- Sense of Town history
- Pride of the people
- Friendly, small town feel
- Family living & friendly neighbors
- Quiet living
- Low crime rate. Safe community.
- Volunteerism – community spirit – volunteer organizations
- People concerned about people
- Nice housing
- Easy transportation (highways and freeway) access
- Good road maintenance, including excellent snow removal
- Winding country roads
- Fire protection and EMS system (excellent volunteer fire department)
- Parks and golf courses
- Town equipment
- Youth programs (e.g., Richfield Little League and Soccer)
- School system
- Recycling
- No Town debt
- Local businesses. Limited chain businesses. Great restaurants.
- Reasonable taxes
- Wildlife, wetlands, lakes, and streams
- Kettle Moraine; unique rolling geographical areas due to the glacial terrain
- Open areas, scenic beauty
- Agriculture (e.g., family farms)
- Agricultural heritage
- Clean air
- Gypsy moth control
- Water quality and the water analysis program
- Community churches – variety of worship choices
- Holy Hill
- Historical society – Mill Restoration Project
- Stable Town government
- Good communication by the Town Board to keep the people informed
- Washington County Sheriff's Department
- Proximity to Milwaukee and adjoining cities and airports
- Large lot sizes
- Bedroom community
- Balance of growth and preservation/good land mix

**Vision and Value Workshop held at the Richfield Chalet on February 19, 2004**



## Weaknesses

- Lack of affordable housing
- Inadequate road system – poor condition of existing pavement
- Subdivision speed limit enforcement
- Poor internal transportation network
- Too much traffic on HWY 164
- Lack of elderly housing
- Lack of a high school (long distance to travel)
- Five school districts – should be centralized. Different school districts divide the community into social segments.
- Too many post offices
- Lack of a local police presence
- No retirement center/senior center

- No reciprocity (non-resident) to school district for recreation departments
- Lack of a unified garbage collection system
- Amenities available for taxes paid seems out of balance
- Low aesthetic value of downtown areas
- Lack of business/industrial development
- Gateway to community STH 167 corridor
- Anti-business attitude toward existing businesses
- Too many hamlets – not enough identity
- No hardware store, laundry mats or library
- Businesses don't seem to be active in the community
- No community focus/central identity/downtown area
- Lack of understanding of the financial and environmental impacts of continued residential and business development
- Historic lack of planning – too much development too soon
- Over population
- Type of development (scattered, low density, sprawl)
- Threat of annexation from Germantown
- Lack of clout verses Germantown and West Bend
- Perceived lack of consistency in ordinance enforcement

## **O**pportunities

- Planning, planning, planning –to define what we want to be
- Avoid cookie-cutter planning of neighboring communities to restrict population growth
- Develop outdoor bike/hiking/recreation trails
- Create easements for walkers, skiers, bikers
- Control traffic – do not force a 4-lane highway through the Town
- STH 164 / USH41/45 intersection improvements
- Consolidate schools to decrease bussing (e.g., build our own high school and merge the K-8 schools of Freiss Lake and Richfield)
- Develop parks
- Develop a senior center and senior programs like Shaur Arts Center in Hartford
- Protect our local water supply
- Capitalize and enhance natural space
- Maintain open space, parks and agriculture
- Maintain the rural atmosphere
- Create a community image that others outside of Richfield envy and desire to visit
- Attract more light industrial development
- Develop a small, responsible industrial park to create more local jobs
- Downtown [hamlet] improvements
- Expand a central community area for common activities
- Become a village
- Work with other communities to meet common needs
- Make sure local government remains responsive to citizen needs
- Architectural control over commercial development

## **T**hreats

- Heavy traffic
- Making 4-5 lane roads / widening of roads (particularly STH 164)
- Multiple family housing / high density residential development
- People building big houses then moving in 2 years
- Too much residential development
- Over development – loss of rural character
- Unorganized / unplanned development
- Too much outdoor lighting
- Crime
- Lack of education about how to use septic systems
- Lack of a high school
- Need for services
- Long-term quality of ground and surface water supplies

- Water/sewer problems with growth
- Loss of agriculture
- Lack of open spaces and parks
- Loss of rural character
- Air quality
- Annexation
- Over regulation

### Community Values

During the vision and value meeting held on February 19, 2004, those in attendance were asked to identify the values that influence people to live in Richfield. More importantly, participants were asked what makes residents remain, take pride in, and become actively involved in the community. A summary list of those values is provided below. These value statements provided a clear direction for the development and implementation of this plan. Moreover, these values clearly indicate that residents share a strong sense of community identity and pride closely associated with the rural character and natural areas that make the Richfield a desirable place to live.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The mixture of woods, farm fields, and homes</li> <li>▪ The friendliness of the people</li> <li>▪ The Kettle Moraine geography (e.g., rolling hills)</li> <li>▪ Holy Hill</li> <li>▪ The small town atmosphere – people know their neighbors and have fun together enjoying the lakes, parks and trails</li> <li>▪ Location – close to Milwaukee, surrounding cities, highways and the airport, yet still a country setting</li> <li>▪ Great place to raise a family</li> <li>▪ Individual, on-site sewer; individual wells; abundant water recharge areas; no municipal sewer and water systems</li> <li>▪ The presence of wildlife</li> <li>▪ The way the wetlands have been preserved for wildlife</li> <li>▪ A lot of green space and large properties</li> <li>▪ Good schools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good roads; minimal traffic</li> <li>▪ The peaceful, friendly, quiet, country atmosphere</li> <li>▪ The opportunity to farm</li> <li>▪ Slower pace of living</li> <li>▪ Farms and farming activities</li> <li>▪ The long views (vistas) available to enjoy the village's scenic beauty, sunsets and night stargazing</li> <li>▪ Local community organizations</li> <li>▪ The presence of the Daniel Boone Conservation League</li> <li>▪ Property taxes are low in comparison to other nearby communities</li> <li>▪ Village government and services.; excellent volunteer fire department; appreciate opportunities to be involved with local government decisions</li> <li>▪ Evidence of pride in the community (e.g., historical mill, well kept &amp; attractive housing)</li> </ul> |
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- Sense of community history (e.g., Kettle Moraine, Holy Hill, early WI settlers)
- Curvy roads and “northwoods” character in certain areas
- Clean air
- Increasing property values
- Local golf courses
- Local churches
- Local places of business
- No large retail development
- Sense of security (low crime)
- Fireflies and frogs
- Fall colors

### Vision Development

To begin to develop vision statements for each of the nine required plan elements, a special exercise was included as part of the Vision and Value Meeting held on February 19, 2004. In this exercise, participants were given a worksheet that included a series of open-ended statements to complete. The idea was to complete the sentences to describe conditions in 2025. What follows are the partial statements included on the worksheet.

- Residents of the Town take great pride in ...
- Residents are most concerned about ...
- Retired and senior residents who grew up in the area ...
- Attractive and desirable housing can be described as ...
- The Town provides the following services for residents ...
- The Town offers (may be provided by others, i.e., schools) the following facilities for residents ...
- Recreational opportunities include ...
- For entertainment and cultural activities ...
- Farming operations in the Town are ...
- Recreation choices in the Town include ...
- Commercial and industrial development adjacent to USH41 in the Town of Richfield includes ...
- Commercial and industrial development adjacent to STH164 through Richfield includes ...
- Commercial development in other areas includes ...
- The Town works harmoniously with neighboring communities to ...
- Looking down at the Town from an airplane a resident would see ...
- The *Richfield 2025 Comprehensive Plan* was ...

In small groups, everyone shared their ideas. Each group then developed a consensus statement to finish each statement. The ideas expressed were used to create the various vision statements included in Chapter 11.

### Cognitive Mapping

A cognitive map, or mental map, is a map drawn by a person that geographically locates his or her memories, ideas and thoughts of a particular place. Since cognitive maps are based on individual's preferences and opinions there are no “right” or “wrong” maps. Cognitive maps are used to delineate geographic areas of a community people like, dislike, frequently visit feel are important, travel through regularly, feel safe, etc.



At the Land Use Mapping Forum on June 17, 2004, participants were given two maps of the Town of Richfield. On the first map, participants outlined portions of the Town based on their opinion of aesthetic appeal. The most attractive



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places were colored in one shade and not attractive in another color. Participants also identified important local travel routes and residences on this map.

On the second map, participants outlined those areas where they would like to see a new commercial/industrial development, new residential development, new recreation areas, farmland, and open space in Richfield in the year 2025.

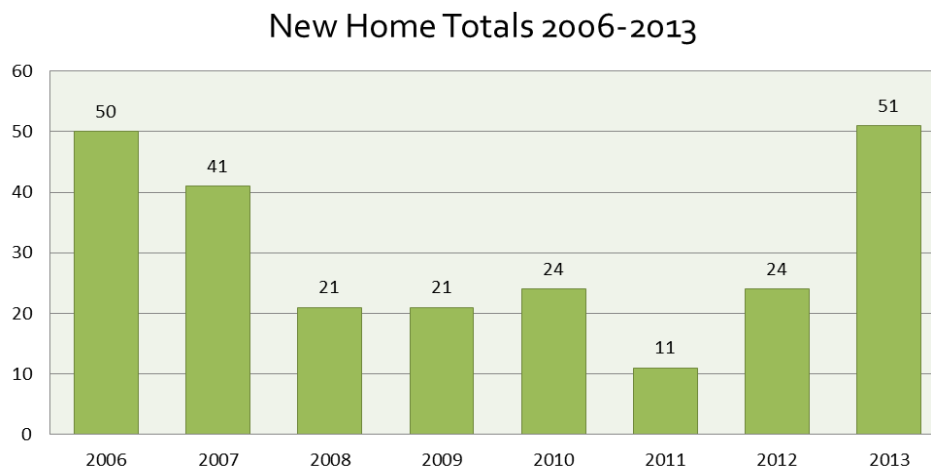
These maps were used in the development of the future land use maps presented later in the plan. This approach was helpful in understanding community concerns and priorities for the future. More information about this activity, including composite and majority opinion maps, is provided in the Village's Map Listing Section of this plan.

### 3. Housing

#### Rate of Housing Development

The effects of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, coined the 'Great Recession' started in approximately 2008, four (4) years after the completion of our last Comprehensive Plan. The reverberating effects on the Village's housing market as a result of the tightening of lending restrictions has been noticeable compared to the boom we were experiencing during the 1990s. Like most municipalities, the housing market in Richfield served as one of many indicators of economic growth. However, since the Great Recession those numbers have steadily been on the decline until only recently. Accordingly to the U.S. Census Bureau, the rate of U.S. homeownership (65.1%) in the first quarter of 2013 was the lowest since 1995.

In the Village of Richfield, the annual number of new housing starts has been somewhat constant over the last few years, albeit lower than what we were experiencing from 1995-2006. However, it has been encouraging to see the number of new housing starts in 2013, 51, raise so dramatically (78.6%) from the previous year.



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**Table 4-9. Single-Family Housing Starts: 1995-2012**

Year	Number	Percent Change from Preceding Year
1995	61	-
1996	80	31.1
1997	84	5.0
1998	80	-4.8
1999	99	23.8
2000	78	-21.2
2001	67	-14.1
2002	65	-3.0
2003	113	73.8
2004	89	-21.2
2005	79	-11.2
2006	50	-36.7
2007	41	-18.0
2008	21	-48.8
2009	21	0.0
2010	24	14.3
2011	11	-54.2
2012	28	154.5
<b>2013</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>78.6</b>

Source: Village of Richfield, Building Inspector

### Availability of Senior Housing

The availability of senior housing as the population continues to grow was a concern identified in the 2004 Comprehensive Planning efforts. Specifically, some residents were concerned about providing an adequate supply of assisted living units for those elderly residents who want to remain in Richfield. It is not feasible, from an economic perspective, for Richfield to develop senior housing. Moreover, Washington County has no plans to establish a senior housing facility in Richfield. As a result, in order for assisted living facilities to be developed in Richfield, private developers will have to determine a market need and establish facilities. Currently there are senior housing options in the neighboring communities of Slinger, Menomonee Falls and Germantown. In the Village's Chapter 70 Zoning Code, nursing homes are listed as a 'Permitted Principal Use' in the I-1, Institutional Zoning District.

### Awareness of Housing Programs

The Village is a participant in a four county (Washington, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Jefferson) HOME Consortium that helps qualified property owners maintain their homes and to help first-time homebuyers with financing. Its primary objective is to stimulate the creation of affordable housing using federal HOME funding. Today the Consortium oversees the operation of four programs in the four-county areas: a home ownership assistance program, home buyer counseling, home rehabilitation assistance and affordable housing development. The Village should ensure information about this program is widely available to those who might qualify. Desire for Mixed Developments and Affordable Housing Choices

During the development of this plan in 2004, some residents expressed a desire to see more diversity in the housing choices available in the Village, particularly in areas east of STH 175. To date, the Village has one subdivision which is zoned for two-family development, Fairway Fields off of STH 175. A key challenge in identifying areas where mixed development and more affordable housing choices could be potentially located is the lack of municipal sewer and water as well as the soil conditions. Because the Village

has no plans for municipal utilities those types of high-density water users are unlikely to benefit or be sustainable on a traditional well and septic system. As we will discuss below, the current housing stock in the Village is mixed between older, more established subdivisions and newer cluster subdivisions. The bulk of affordable housing choices in the Village will be found in those older parts of Richfield.

### Condition of Older Housing Units

While Richfield has many high quality new homes being constructed, the Village also has a significant number that are more than 40 years old. These older, more established homes, are generally much smaller than the newer houses being built. As such, these older homes represent the bulk of the affordable housing choices in the community. Many of these older homes are located around the lakes and in and near some of the incorporated hamlets. While a small fraction of these homes have been converted to rental units, most of these smaller, established homes are being purchased and renovated by people seeking quality affordable housing choices in the community. To address maintenance concerns related to the upkeep of these older homes (and the continued upkeep of newer homes), the Village in 2011 adopted a new chapter in its code of ordinances relating to property maintenance.

### Affordability

Housing affordability is a problem in most parts of Wisconsin. The ability to afford shelter is especially problematic for those with special needs, the elderly, and low- and moderate-income residents. Working with local organizations, the Village should work to increase the supply and diversity of affordable housing in the area.

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## 4. Transportation

### Access Management

Roads serve two competing functions: property access and mobility. As one increases in importance, the other declines. To help manage the transportation system, roads are categorized based on their function. To maintain traffic mobility, the Village should have an access management program for the roads under its jurisdiction. It may require the use of control spacing between access points, and control left turn movements.

### Use of Roundabouts

Over the next 20 years, various intersections will need to be controlled to provide traffic safety. For years, the standard solution has been to install traffic signals. However, roundabouts are becoming more widely used because they are more efficient in moving traffic and are safer than traffic signals. The cost of installing a roundabout is also less than installing and maintaining traffic signals. While the purpose of this plan is not to develop detailed intersection improvements, this plan does support the use of roundabouts when conditions warrant.

### Carpooling

Park-and-ride lots are available along the USH 41/45 corridor and more recently, Washington County has installed one in the Endeavor Business Park. The Village should continue to support the utilization of these lots and encourage residents to carpool whenever practical.

### Freight Rail

Over the last century, the amount of rail freight moved within the state has increased, while the number of railroads operating in Wisconsin has declined along with the miles of rail line operated. It is anticipated that the number of railroad companies operating in the state will continue to decline through mergers and/or acquisitions and as they continue to cease operation. The rail lines through Richfield are major north/south routes and will continue to see large volumes of traffic well into the future. There are rail spurs that provide rail access to a number of local businesses.

### Passenger Rail

Passenger rail access is currently not available in the Village. SEWRPC has identified the area near the USH 41/45 corridor as a potential high-speed commuter rail route, but the likelihood of this route being completed before the 2025 is remote. Since 1996, the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRI) advanced from a series of service concepts, including increased operating speeds, train frequencies, system connectivity, and high service reliability, into a well-defined vision to create a 21st century regional passenger rail system. This vision has been transformed into a transportation plan known as the Midwest Regional Rail Systems (MWRRS). The primary purpose of the MWRRS is to meet future regional travel needs through significant improvements to the level and quality of regional passenger rail service.

### Transit Service Available Through Washington County

The County has limited service available to physically disabled individuals and seniors. Use of these services is expected to continue in the future to meet Village resident needs.

Mobility vs. Access

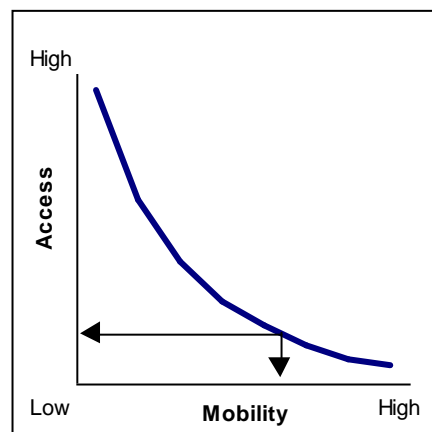


Exhibit 2-1. An Example of a Roundabout



Photo Credit: Oregon Department of Transportation

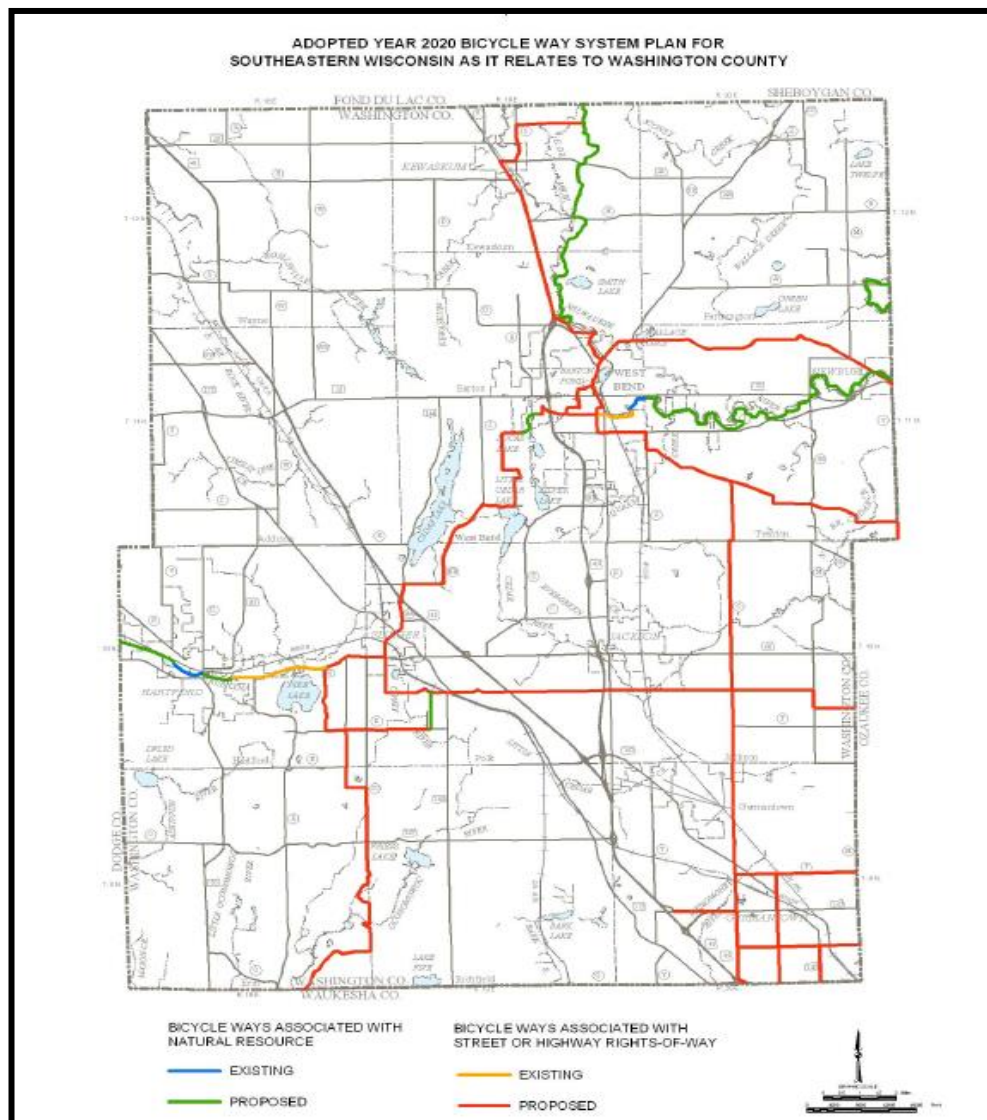


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## Pedestrian and Bike Connections

The many highways that traverse the community have traffic volumes that present a challenge to pedestrians and cyclists. As Richfield continues to grow, considerations for safe pedestrian and bike access to local amenities must be considered. For state highway projects, sidewalks and/or bikepaths will be provided consistent with the requirements in Chapter Trans 75 (Bikeways and Sidewalks in Highway Projects), Wis. Admin. Code.

Presently there are no bicycle trails through Richfield. The *Washington County Park and Open Space Plan (2004)* indicates CTC CC (Richfield's western boundary) as a proposed bicycle way. Today, cyclists have to share the roadways with vehicles, which is not advisable given the high traffic volumes and speeds present to cyclists. Ideally trails will eventually traverse the Village to link together residential areas, recreation areas, schools, and hamlets. An in-depth study, considering such pertinent factors as topographic constraints, storm water conveyance, and minimum right-of-way requirements could be conducted to determine the precise location and type of trail facility to be provided.



An opportunity also exists to provide additional connections through the many privately owned open areas in the subdivision developments scattered across the Village. The residents of subdivisions in which the open space is located own these areas. They are not considered public space. In some of these subdivisions, the residents use these areas for birding, hiking, and other recreational pursuits. In other subdivisions, residents do not access these areas.

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**Safety Concerns**

During the planning process in 2004, a number of safety concerns were identified. Likewise, in the community survey, residents expressed strong support for several enhancements to the transportation network including separate turn lanes at intersections, street lighting, shoulder widening, center left-turn lane installation, and traffic signals. Below are those major issues.

- Substandard geometric conditions of major Village roads.
- The fact that the USH 41/45 ramps are stop controlled (e.g., no signalization or other improvement to better direct traffic).
- Traffic congestion.
- Subdivision speed limit enforcement.
- The need for intersection announcement signage and improved sight lines for turning traffic on/off STH 164.
- Snowmobilers have a number of routes that run along busy roadways. At times, snowmobiles may actually travel into the right-of-way. This presents a safety concern.
- Limited safe areas for walking, jogging, or bicycling in the community, especially for young children.
- The need to reduce the speed limit on STH 164 from 55 to 45 miles per hour.
- The need to increase internal circulation (connection between developments) and improve mobility (e.g., consider lane widening, bypass lanes, access management, intersection improvements) to make travel through safe, convenient, and efficient.

**Truck Engine Braking Noise**

At the Transportation Element meeting held on April 1, 2004, some residents expressed concern about the noise from truck traffic using engine-braking systems that utilize engine exhaust to slow the vehicle on STH 164, STH 167, and STH 175. This system of braking is commonly referred to as compression braking or a "jake brake." Sometimes when truck engine breaks are applied they produce a very loud and often undesirable exhaust noise. This loud noise is the result of a faulty exhaust system on the truck. To address this issue, the Village would need to pass a local noise ordinance and then submit a written request to WisDOT for a permit to install and maintain signs (e.g., No Engine Braking Except in Emergency). The signs cannot be used for steep downgrades that meet certain conditions as outlined in the DOT Traffic Guidelines Manual 2-2-30.

**State Highway 164**

State Highway 164 is a major north south roadway and is under the control of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Just about everyone is in agreement that the roadway is deficient, and the proposed project for 2017 will address the rehabilitation of the existing pavement and address operational and safety concerns in the project corridor. The WisDOT project is approximately 7.5 miles in length and extends from just north of County Q in the southern portion of the Village's borders to just north of County E in Washington County. The goals of the project are to improve safety and pavement conditions.

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Since 1994, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has identified the future expansion of STH 164 from a 2-lane to 4-lane roadway. Most recently, the *Washington County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan* adopted in 2006 calls for the widening of STH 164.

In the late 1990s, WisDOT initiated a corridor study related to the need for expansion and other associated improvements. The study, finished in 2001, concluded that the roadway should be widened to 4 lanes when traffic volumes exceed 13,000 vehicles per day. Projections indicate this will not occur before 2025.

While the Wisconsin DOT plans for the STH 164 reconstruction are still under development, the Village will continue to be an active partner with project managers. A final determination of the preferred design alternatives will be made with the approval of the Environmental Report and the Design Study report in 2013-14.

### Transportation Budgeting

Another long-standing transportation issue in Richfield is the ever-present concern of road maintenance and improvement costs. These activities are a major expense and can consume a large share of the Village budget. The Village adopted a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in 2012 and uses a CIP and budget to help effectively anticipate transportation costs over time.

### Road Connectivity

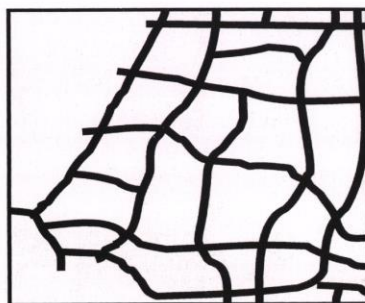
The purpose of a street network is to connect spatially separated places and to enable movement from one place to another. With few exceptions, a local street network connects every place in a community to every other place in the community. But, depending on the design of the network, the quality of those connections will vary.

The rolling topography and abundant natural resources of Richfield challenge the layout of roads. Many areas of the Village have developed in a separated fashion with poor connectivity. As land is developed in the future for residential purposes, streets need to be connected because of an interconnected street network will:

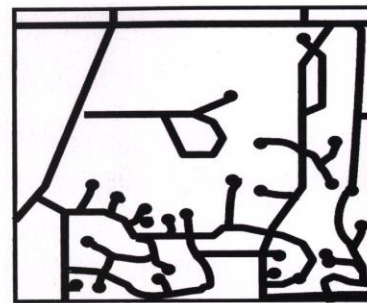
- decrease traffic on arterial streets;
- provide for continuous and more direct routes that facilitate travel by non-motorized modes such as walking and bicycling;
- provide greater emergency vehicle access and reduced response time, and conversely, provide multiple routes of evacuation in case of disasters such as tornadoes; and
- improve the quality of utility connections, facilitate maintenance, and enable more efficient trash and recycling collection and other transport-based community services.



Exhibit 2-3. Comparison of Two Street Networks



High connectivity



Low connectivity



**Official Map**

The extension of the road network is critical to development. For this reason, Richfield should consider adopting an *Official Map* to preserve corridors for future capacity expansion, access controls, and to reduce the impacts of future development with possible turn lanes, bypass lanes, and intersection improvements. Any *Official Map* adopted by the Village would need to be updated to keep pace with development.

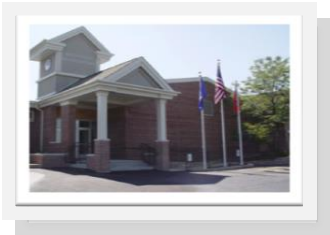
**5. Utilities and Community Facilities**

**Lack of a Unified School District**

Approximately 10 years ago, a referendum failed that would have provided a consolidated high school in the Village of Richfield for the Friess Lake and Richfield School Districts. Today, these two districts send their graduates to Union High School in Hartford and Germantown High School. The issue continues to be of interest. The Village of Richfield is a part of five different school districts. While there are several elementary schools located in the Village, there are no high schools. As a result, for some students bussing times can be rather lengthy. This situation also hampers a collective sense of community, as many people affiliate more with their school district than their zip code or township. With five different school districts it is hard not to experience some division within the community, particularly if one school district offers more, or different programs (both educational and athletic) than another.



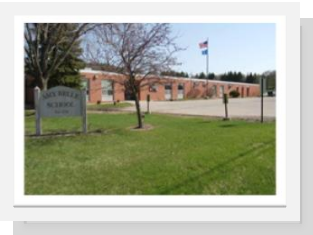
Friess Lake School



Richfield Elementary School



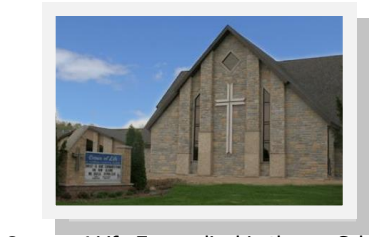
Plat Elementary School



Amy Belle



St. Gabriel School



Crown of Life Evangelical Lutheran School



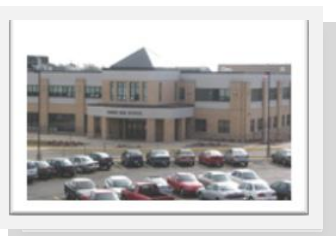
St. Augustine Incorporated School



Hartford Union High School



Germantown High School



Slinger High

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An opportunity that does exist is the potential to merge the two K-8 districts (Richfield and Freiss Lake) to create a unified district. This opportunity has both potential positive and negative aspects. For example, it may result in larger class sizes. However, it may also promote efficiency in building space, teacher utilization, bussing and promote a greater sense of community by reducing the number of school districts.

Complicating matters, under the full-time inter-district open enrollment program, Wisconsin students may apply to attend school in any K-12 public school district in the state, regardless of whether or not they live in the district. Families of students who transfer from their local district do not pay tuition. However, a local district loses state aid for each student who transfers to another district and gains state aid for each student who transfers from another district. The program first took effect in the 1998-99 school year. It is designed to encourage competition among districts as a means of fostering improvement in public schools, and to provide families with increased flexibility in their educational choices.

### Colocation of Parks and Public Schools

Public schools generally provide some sort of outdoor recreational facilities that are available for public (non-school) use. In the case of an elementary school, the facilities might include play apparatus and hard surface areas for group games. Baseball diamonds and soccer fields are more common at middle schools and high schools. While it is unrealistic to believe these school facilities will handle all of a community's recreational needs, it is possible to develop public recreational facilities on or adjoining to the school grounds that will benefit both the school and the community. To the extent possible, the Village and schools, public and private, should work together to develop complementary recreational facilities. This will help to provide more facilities, reduce redundant services, and foster intergovernmental cooperation.

### Parks as Community Assets

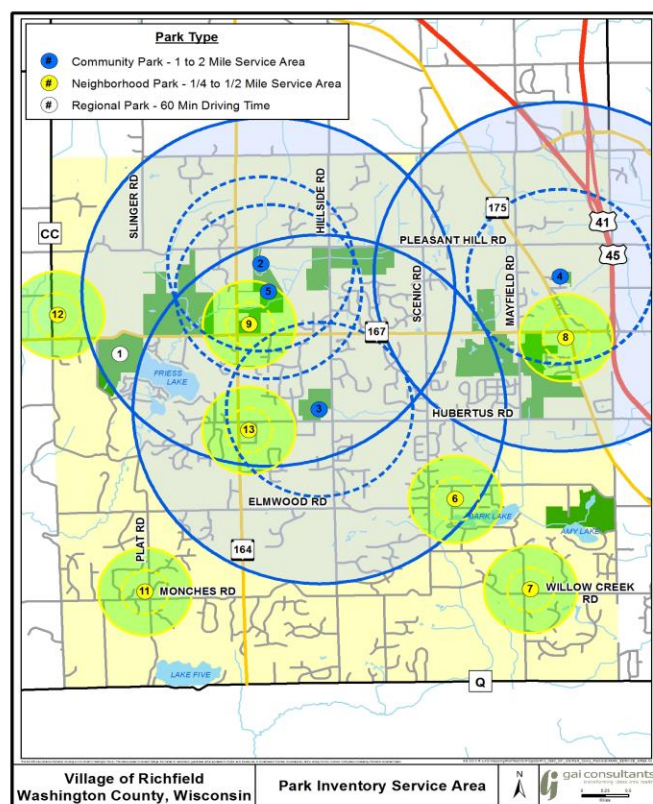
Community parks are visible evidence of what a community thinks of itself. Development and maintenance of park areas should not be an afterthought but a part of an overall blueprint for community development. As the Village's population grows in the coming years, the Village should develop new parks to accommodate the growing demand and locate them so as to promote community involvement and activity.

### Shifting Demand for Recreational Opportunities

Recreation is a necessity throughout each person's life. From youth to old age residents enjoy and need the physical and psychological stimulation recreation provides. For many years, communities could not build enough youth baseball diamonds to keep up with demand. Now with the aging of the population and a shift in societal attitudes, people are now asking for more passive recreational opportunities where involvement in an organized sport league or event is not necessary. The Village will need to monitor shifts in demand for recreational facilities and work to respond to meet any unmet needs.

### Municipal Water and Sanitary Sewer Systems

The low-density scattered nature of development in the Village of Richfield makes the establishment of a municipal water system cost prohibitive given the distance between homes and developed areas. When the Village has been





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faced with proposals for sewer and water (Cabela's, Reflections Village, Endeavor Business Park, etc), the Village Board has rejected such proposals, and have worked with the developer and the citizens of Richfield toward acceptable alternatives, without impact to the community at-large. Additionally, the Village does not have any of the statutorily required codified ordinances to install a municipal utility. Pursuant to Section §66.0805 Wis. Stats., "the governing body shall exercise general control and supervision of the (utilities) commission by enacting ordinances governing the commission's operations". Given the geological and geographical makeup of this area, as well as the community's clear desire to keep Richfield rural, it is unlikely the installation of municipal sewer and water will occur.

### Fire Protection

The Richfield Volunteer Fire Company maintains a staff of dedicated volunteers. However, it may become more difficult find qualified people to volunteer their time in the coming years because more and more residents do not work in the immediate area and the overall age of the community is getting older. At some point, the Village will need to determine when it may become necessary to hire full-time firefighters.



Richfield Volunteer Fire Company, training exercise (2013)

### Public Safety

Generally speaking, most Village residents feel safe and enjoy Richfield's low crime statistics. This sense of security is a characteristic generally associated with a small-town atmosphere. This is not to say that crime is absent, because it is not. The community supports efforts to maintain adequate policing to maintain that sense of personal security. Since incorporating as a Village in 2008, the Village has partnered with the Washington County Sheriff's Office to provide this essential service to our residents.

### Regionalizing Services

In the wake of Wisconsin's debate over the future of shared revenue, the Village of Richfield understands the need to carefully consider all expenditures. The Village has demonstrated its commitment to regionalized services, minimizing municipal staff, and encouraging coordination among governments in many respects. To continue to provide efficient, cost-effective services over time, the Village may need to consider additional opportunities to regionalize additional services. Regionalizing services can minimize duplication and promote cost efficiency in park facility maintenance, recreation program offerings, road maintenance, waste collection and other areas, which may reduce the tax burden for all residents. Shared service opportunities should also consider the school districts (i.e., shared maintenance and janitorial staff, shared facilities) and the potential for consolidation between the school districts to better serve residents (e.g., shared bussing).

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## 6. Agriculture

### Specialty Farming

Specialty or niche farming is an opportunity for local farmers to capitalize on to allow farming to remain an economically productive part of the Village's future. Given Richfield's proximity to Milwaukee and surrounding communities, the Village has the opportunity to market itself to these population centers to bring customers to the Village seeking products like:

- Organic milk and cheese from local dairy operations.
- Organic vegetables and produce.
- Wine and juices (modeled after operations in Door County, subject to climate and soil limitations).
- Aquaculture products.
- Pumpkin patches, berry farms, and orchards that allow visitors to pick-their own produce.
- Walnuts, maple syrup and pine trees (for landscaping or holidays) from local tree farms.
- Horse farms (offering boarding and perhaps trail access to ride – capitalizing again on the market in Milwaukee and surrounding areas).

Organic food is a fast-growing industry in the United States. Products that once occupied a boutique marketplace niche are becoming more common, even in large grocery stores. Organic and specialty farming bucks the notion that farms must become very big or be lost to development. They provide a profitable choice for small, local farmers.



### Farmland Preservation

While farmland still covers a significant amount of land, the reality is that a few families own the remaining farms. Much of the cropland that does exist is being rented out to farmers in other communities or being used as small hobby farms. As area farmers age, they are likely to consider selling their land to finance their retirement.

Given the comparatively high cost of land in the Village (as compared to other areas of the state), the unique challenges of the rolling Kettle Moraine topography, and the fact that residential areas are scattered throughout the community, the Village is not highly desirable for large-scale farming and can be a challenging environment for traditional, smaller family farms.



## 7. Natural Resources

### Air Quality

Richfield is located in the Milwaukee metropolitan area and as such is subject to poor air quality. As the population in the region continues to grow, air quality is expected to decline somewhat. Fugitive dust is also a concern especially for property owners near active metallic mines.

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### Wetlands

Since European settlement, countless acres of wetlands have been filled or significantly altered across the United States. In Wisconsin, thousands of acres of wetland have been destroyed over the years. Wetland regulations have been adopted at the federal and state level to protect wetland destruction. While these regulations have significantly curtailed the destruction of wetlands, it is still possible to fill or modify a wetland. The Village, through its land development regulations, may provide additional protection of wetlands during the land development process.

### Cumulative Environmental Change

Most of the regulatory framework that is in place to review proposed development projects is based on assessing the individual impacts of isolated development projects to minimize negative environmental effects. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that this approach is ignoring the cumulative effects of many actions and choices, which individually are relatively minor, but which accumulate to a point where the end result is quite undesirable.



#### Protection of Groundwater

Heavy pumping, constructing excessive impervious surfaces, and rapid, unchecked development are all elements that if not properly monitored can cause the depletion of a municipality's precious groundwater supply. In light of that fact, in 2004 Richfield took a proactive stance on this issue passing the State's first "Groundwater Protection Ordinance" to safeguard all its residents who rely solely on groundwater. As a result

of that ordinance and rigorous water monitoring efforts, the Village is proud to announce that ten (10) years later, even with increased development, average groundwater levels have risen nearly 3 feet overall since 2004.

Since 2003, the water levels of over 40 private wells spaced geographically throughout the Village have been personally monitored every other month by Dr. Cherkauer, the Village's contracted hydrologist. The Village continues to maintain ample levels of water resources as a result, even with large commercial developments like Cabelas', Endeavor Business Park, and various local strip malls which operate without municipal sewer and water services.

#### Preservation of Surface Water Quality

The lakes and streams of Richfield are an important community asset. Accordingly, preservation of the quality of these surface waters is important.

As additional development occurs, lawns are created which require fertilizer application and impervious surface (e.g., rooftops, driveways, etc.) increases. Fertilizers and storm water runoff from impervious surface will impact surface water quality over time. Lakes naturally evolve toward a eutrophic state. This process is rapidly expedited by development and its associated impacts. Surface waters with little diversity (e.g., fish and vegetation) and poor quality are often the result.

#### Preserving Rural Character

As recently as 2012 when the Village was adopting its Strategic Plan, one common theme heard from residents was the desire to see the Village's



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rural character preserved. To many, this means the preservation of the natural areas and open spaces along Richfield's roadways. Beyond efforts to utilize conservation-based subdivision techniques, encourage farmland preservation, and protect open spaces, the Village may want to consider other avenues to protect open space. For example, the Village could seek to establish natural/farmland buffers (50 to 100 feet wide) along designated corridors as a tool to preserve the rural character of the community and also provide additional wildlife corridors.

## 8. Economic Development

### Communication between the Village of Richfield and Local Businesses

With stronger working relationships and open communication, local businesses will better understand local regulations, programs, and plans. Accordingly, it is hoped that improved communication will result in businesses that view the Village as a partner in their growth and development pursuits. The Village will support the creation of a local business group or chamber of commerce to further develop the business community in the Village.

### Tourism

The Village has some opportunity to market itself to tourists interested in the area's lakes, parks, and the Kettle Moraine. In the future, agri-tourism (e.g. farmers markets, organic farming, and roadside stands) and trail development can act as means to attract some tourist dollars to Richfield. The Village's investment in infrastructure (e.g., trails, roads, streetscaping, and beautification) and the promotion of local events (e.g., concerts, festivals, farmers markets) is an important part of the Village's family atmosphere and also a potential draw for some people to visit the community.

### Agriculture

Although agriculture is a dominant land use in the Village, it accounts for a relatively small share of economic activity. The Village can work to support the existing local agricultural economy on a number of ways. But it is anticipated that 30-40 years from now the vast majority of agricultural land will be replaced with single-family homes.

- Provide a centralized marketplace for local farmers to sell goods. The ideal location for this would be the large parking lots available in the plazas located at the intersection of STH 175 and Hubertus Road. In the summer of 2013, the Sterling Chalet and Bilda's Friess Lake Pub each acquired zoning permits to operate farmers markets on their respective properties. This arrangement has the added benefit of bringing customers to the community to also shop in the businesses located within the plazas.
- Coordinate with local farmers, and Richfield Historical Society, to develop a historical and/or niche farm tour. This tour should be included on the Village website and also the subject of a brochure.
- Develop an educational brochure explaining how to establish accessory uses in agricultural districts.
- Organize educational seminars for farmers about the tools the Village can provide to accommodate development requests (e.g., transfer and purchase of development rights, zoning ordinance tools) and other opportunities they may want to consider in their farming practice (e.g., the sale of farm by-products for energy generation, organic farming opportunities, niche farming opportunities).

### Residential Development as Economic Development

Presently, residential development is the primary source of the local tax base. Accordingly, in Richfield economic development is often seen as residential development, particularly west of STH 175. Fortunately, from an economic standpoint, residential development is growing in the Village. Moreover, the housing being developed is generally of significant value. As such, it continues to provide an increasing share of the Village's tax base. Therefore, residential development does provide some economic development gains for the Village.



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However, to a much greater degree than commercial and industrial development, housing requires extensive services to accommodate resident needs. These services include schools, parks, trails, public safety, roads and associated maintenance (including snowplowing), and other amenities.

In anticipation of updating the Comprehensive Plan, the Village undertook a 'Community Buildout Analysis to facilitate community discussion about the long-term fiscal impacts of different types of land uses. Relatively few communities explicitly consider the fiscal impacts of various types of development as part of their land use planning discussion. However, fiscal impact studies have shown that fiscal impacts vary by land use. Some classes of land use tend to generate more in tax revenues than they cost to provide services, helping keep tax rates lower than others. Other classes of land uses tend to demand more in service than is support by the property tax revenues they generate, causing an increase in tax rates over time. While ultimately a majority of the Village will remain single family zoning, the corridor of land along STH 175 and east has been generally identified by the Plan Commission and Village Board as area that is ripe for non-residential development. A copy of the 'Community Buildout Analysis' is attached in the appendix.

A number of community studies have been completed across the country to compare tax revenue generated by different land uses (e.g., commercial, industrial, single-family residential, multi-family residential) to the municipal services they require. Study after study demonstrates that single-family residential development often increases public costs by a larger amount than it increases tax revenue for local governments that must provide those services. Commercial and industrial development has a much more positive balance relative to tax dollars paid and dollars expended on services.

For example, the Town of Dunn in Dane County conducted a study in 1994 and found that residential development cost \$1.24 in services for every dollar collected in revenue (i.e., a net shortfall). The ratios for commercial and industrial uses were far more favorable (e.g., for every \$1 in tax revenues collected significantly less than \$1 of services is required). Not surprisingly, the ratio is most favorable for farmland and natural areas.

Village residents need to understand that a strong reliance on the residential tax base may result in higher property taxes, fewer public services and facilities, or a combination of these.

### **Home Occupations**

The Village is home to many home occupations, which are small-scale businesses conducted in a residential setting as an accessory use. To ensure that these businesses operate harmoniously with neighboring residential uses, the Richfield Zoning Ordinance, includes regulations for major and minor home occupations that are designed to protect the residential character of the community. In many ways, the home occupations of Richfield act as local business incubators. Historically, though, as these businesses have grown they have had to look to other communities to relocate. The future land use maps include areas for future commercial, industrial, and office development. Ideally, home occupations would look to these areas once their operations expand beyond a traditional home-based business to a point where the business is no longer accessory to the residential use of the property and the impact on nearby properties is more noticeable (e.g., lighting, signage, outdoor storage, frequent customer traffic, and many employees).

### **Desirable Businesses**

The Village's long-term vision recognizes that the Village is a bedroom community in 2035 and highlights the need to preserve natural features, maintain farmland, and continue to offer a quality country living environment. Accordingly, it is important that economic development respect these visions by being of a smaller scale. Intensive industry (with potential pollution concerns) and large commercial establishments (e.g., superstores and strip malls) are not consistent with this image.

Residents have clearly expressed that local business choices should be available to meet basic needs (e.g., gasoline, groceries, banks), and to support tourism, but overall the Village should remain a rural, residential community with abundant natural areas.

Some additional local development is desired, if appropriately located to minimize potential conflicts with residential areas (e.g., near existing development, near highway corridors). This could include some small-scale (professional)



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office development at various intersections and also potentially integrated with subdivisions. It is expected that new development will exist in harmony with the Village's rural setting and respect local zoning and design standards. To ensure this, design standards and review policies are needed.

Given the concern over groundwater withdrawal and contamination, those land uses which require large volumes of water are discouraged (car wash, hotel). Likewise, dry cleaners and other establishments that utilize extensive chemicals are also discouraged as a means to prevent potential groundwater contamination.

### **Non-Metallic Mining**

Non-metallic mines are one form of economic development. The potential exists for additional non-metallic operations or expansion of existing operations in the Village. Extensive regulations exist that require any non-metallic mining operation to develop a reclamation plan to indicate how the property will be utilized after the mining operation is complete. Given the potential intensity of quarries (e.g., noise, vibration), it is imperative that quality local ordinances are in place, as well as, necessary impact fees to mitigate the damage done by trucks hauling materials. Moreover, operations agreements should be utilized to control things such as blasting procedures, hours of operation, lighting, and the like.

## **9. Intergovernmental Cooperation**

### **Shared Services**

Intergovernmental cooperation between and among cities, counties, towns and Villages often produces less expensive and more efficient local government services. Mergers of similar service activities can provide substantial cost savings when administrative and equipment duplication is reduced. Also, there are significant savings to be had when smaller governments, like Richfield, combine their purchasing, planning and contracted service delivery processes. The Village of Richfield has taken a leadership role in developing shared services with nearby municipalities and other public entities. Based on the benefits of sharing services, the Village will continue to strengthen existing relationships and look for opportunities in the coming years. The Village currently has a number of long-standing intergovernmental agreements with surrounding taxing jurisdiction such as Washington County, the Richfield Joint School District, the Villages of Sussex and Slinger, Towns of Polk, Erin, Liston and the City of Hartford.



## **10. Land Use**

### **Property Rights**

Throughout the development of this plan, landowners have consistently expressed their desire to see their property rights protected. Property rights have been respected, to the greatest extent feasible, throughout this planning effort. This plan seeks to respect the property rights by illustrating planned development patterns for all property owners to understand and use to make their own personal development decisions. If a landowner disagrees with the future land use maps, or another aspect of this plan, they have the right to petition the Village to amend the document. Any amendments would occur through a public process, including a public hearing.

### **Hamlets**

As documented throughout the plan, there are a number of hamlets that developed in Richfield's early history, including Colgate, Hubertus, Lake Five, Plat, Pleasant Hill, and Richfield. Buildings in these hamlets are typically built closer to the road and contain a mix of commercial and residential uses. Of the hamlets, Richfield is the largest and most well developed in terms of land area and number of buildings. The other hamlets characteristically include a comparatively small number of buildings.

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When the Village's comprehensive plan was first drafted in 2004, hamlets were seen as local destination points and areas where additional growth and development could occur based on that land use pattern. While a number of existing buildings in the hamlet areas have been restored and updated in recent years (e.g., Amichi's, Sloppy Joe's, and Johnny Manhattan's), there has been little new development. In large part, this lack of commercial development is attributed to the low density of residential development throughout much of the Village.

This updated plan recognizes that the Richfield hamlet has enough critical mass to continue and slowly develop in the future. In contrast, the other hamlets are not seen as growth areas.

### Highway Corridors and Interchanges

Public input gathered in 2004 and since then reveals that residents generally support commercial development near the USH 41/45 corridor, away from the residential areas of the community. This idea was also a popular response on the community survey question that asked where, if anywhere, should commercial, office, and/or manufacturing development be located. Landowners of property along this corridor have expressed interest in potentially developing the land. Likewise, the fact that thousands of motorists pass along this corridor each day, it is a difficult market to ignore.

The future land use maps seek to present a pattern for development that respects the opinions and desires of residents, while also accommodating reasonable provisions for economic development which provide opportunities for local employment, cater to the needs of passing motorists, and provide basic goods and services for residents. Any development in this area must adhere to zoning and design requirements.

### Residential Density

The size of new residential lots and overall density in a residential subdivision is a key in maintaining the rural character of the Village. The results of the 2004 community survey, and public input since then, supports comparatively low densities for a village.



### Results from 2004 Community Survey

- 29% said the current 1.25-acre minimum lot size and a 3.0-acre density (no more than one lot for every 3 acres of land) should remain in effect
- 23% supported a 3-acre minimum lot size (larger lots) and a 3-acre density
- 10% preferred a 10-acre minimum lot size (larger lots) and a 10-acre density
- 34% indicated a combination of the above depending on land suitability and geographic location was most desirable

### Timing of Development

The future land use plan included in this plan is an important tool to help guide future growth and development. It depicts those areas of the village where residential, commercial, and industrial development is appropriate and what density or intensity. This map provides a degree of certainty for property owners and developers in terms of the Village's long-range vision. Controlling the timing of development was a considered factor in 2004 due to the growth the town was experiencing, but for this update more credence was given to individual property rights for the ability to sell and develop land as the owner saw fit, so long as it was consistent with our future land use map. That is why the Village made a conscious decision to remove the 10-year future land use map and only develop a singular 20-year future land use map.

### Protection of Scenic Viewsheds

Richfield is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty and rolling kettle moraine topography. While scenery is important to the overall quality of our communities, scenic view sheds are often destroyed during periods of rapid

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change and growth. Identification and protection of these assets is an important component of smart growth and scenic stewardship. The residents of Richfield enjoy wonderful scenic vistas, particularly of Holy Hill. However, some land uses such as telecommunication towers could potentially harm those views. Recognizing the importance of these vistas, the Village adopted land use regulations that limit the overall height of telecommunication towers in the western portion of the Village. This approach should continue. Another way the Village can try to continue to protect its valued rural character and scenic views is by identifying the mapping important rural view sheds and scenic views from key scenic roads, public parks, and other locations valued by the community. After these views are identified, the Village could consider adopting ordinances or working with landowners/developers, to design developments so as to minimize the visual impact. Given that many scenic views may also cross municipal borders, scenic view shed protection agreements may also be a benefit to the Village residents.

Although purchasing parcels of land or easements is among the most expensive options for protecting view sheds, sometimes this is the only way a community can permanently protect scenic view sheds from development. One method for accomplishing this is to establish a land trust. Land trusts are private organizations at the local, state, or regional level that hold land and partial interest in land for the benefit of the public. Some land trusts use 'revolving' funds to purchase threatened land and then resell it at cost to buyers who agree to specific land use restrictions.

**Outdoor Lighting**

More and more communities are recognizing that outdoor lighting can cause light trespass, is often times excessive, and is being used as a means to draw attention to the business. The primary issues relating to outdoor lighting relate to the amount, the type of lighting, the color, and whether the outdoor lighting should be turned off or dimmed when a business is not open. This issue was first raised in the 2004 planning process. Since then, the Village has adopted regulations relating to outdoor lighting.

**Signage**

Outdoor signs are common in all communities and are needed in today's world to convey important information. However, there is stark contrast between a community that is concerned about the visual clutter that too much signage may generate and a community that has few, if any, regulations to control signage. The Village has adopted sign regulations that strike the proper balance.

**Environmental Resources**

Results from the 2004 community survey clearly show that residents consider natural features a very important part of the community. Likewise, resident support for protecting natural areas, including woodlands, wetlands, and rivers is very strong. Therefore, these resources must be protected during the land development process.

**Conservation Subdivision Design**

Recognizing the environmental constraints in the Village and the overriding goal of retaining the natural beauty in the land development process, the Village has adopted the principles associated with the conservation subdivision design process. This design approach clusters the homes into groupings so as to preserve the bulk of the property for its scenic/natural qualities or for farming. An additional benefit of this approach is the lower development costs for road construction, maintenance, and snowplowing. The Village currently utilizes this subdivision technique extensively throughout the community. The common open space that has been protected so far generally consists of woodlands, wetland, or other natural areas as compared to farmland. However, farmland can also be preserved using this technique.

**Extraterritorial Plat Review**

State law gives cities and villages the right to approve or deny subdivision plats in the surrounding towns that are located within its extraterritorial area. In the case of Richfield, this area extends 1½ miles beyond the Village's municipal boundary. The purpose of this authority is to ensure that development in the surrounding towns is compatible with the long-term vision of the municipality. Since incorporation in 2008, the Village has exercised this right. To date, the Village has not objected to any proposed subdivisions or land divisions.